



NEWS RELEASE

CALIFORNIA SECRETARY OF STATE **BRUCE McPHERSON**

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CA Secretary of State Bruce McPherson Visits San Diego to Unveil New Overseas Ballot, New Resources for Military

Secretary McPherson stresses importance of ensuring Military and Overseas Voters have their votes counted

SAN DIEGO, CA - With the backdrop of the historic ship, the Midway, Secretary of State Bruce McPherson today joined with the military support community to announce a new, user-friendly ballot for California's Military and Overseas Voters. He also reminded county registrars that they must send California's Military and Overseas Voters their requested ballots before the Primary Election on June 6.

"More than 30,000 brave men and women from San Diego are overseas preserving our right to vote this year, and it is important that they are also afforded the opportunity to cast their own vote," said Secretary McPherson. "Today, I am introducing a new user-friendly ballot that will allow California's military and other citizens who live overseas to cast their ballot easily and in a timely manner, so that their vote counts."

Secretary McPherson also unveiled a new postcard, which will be sent overseas to 100,000 members of the military to inform them of the new resources available to them in 2006. The postcards will be delivered through Operation Interdependence, a civilian-to-military distribution organization that sends letters and boxed goods to troops.

Joining the effort were the Founder of Operation Interdependence, Albert R. Renteria, USO representative Jack Garland, Executive Director of the Armed Services YMCA of San Diego, Captain Paul Stevens (ret.), and a representative from the United States Postal Service.

"I appreciate the Secretary of State's commitment to ensuring that dedicated military members receive the same opportunity to vote as other citizens, and we are pleased to partner with the state of California on this landmark, first-in-the-nation effort to deliver the message to 100,000 troops this year," said Albert R. Renteria, Founder of Operation Interdependence, an organization that sends letters and boxed goods to deployed troops. "It is the right thing to do for our young men and women who are committed to serving their fellow citizens."

The new overseas ballot appears in a more generic, user-friendly format that allows Military and Overseas Voters to simply write in the candidate and office for which they are voting. This eliminates the need for each county across the state to coordinate a separate ballot for faxing. It reduces administrative work and aims to help expedite the casting of overseas ballots.

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Secretary McPherson also announced new resources for 2006, which will guide troops through the process of voter registration, requesting an absentee ballot, and returning their ballot so that their vote counts. He announced a new e-mail address (MOV@ss.ca.gov) as well as a new section on the Secretary of State's website (www.ss.ca.gov) dedicated to helping Military and Overseas Voters navigate election deadlines.

Resources such as posters, news releases, and information will also be distributed to 20,000 embassies, foreign consulates, and military units through the Federal Voting Assistance Program (FVAP) to inform California's overseas voters.

For more information about California's Military and Overseas Voting (MOV) resources for military, citizens living abroad, and their families, visit: www.ss.ca.gov.

For more information about Operation Interdependence, visit www.oidelivers.org and for more information about the Armed Services YMCA at Camp Pendleton, visit www.asymca.org.